THE COMPANION,

AND WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

BY EDWARD EASY, ESQ.

—"*A safe* COMPANION, *and an* EASY *Friend.*"—Pope.

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Some works come forth at morn, but die at night,
In blazing fringes round a tallow light.
Some may perhaps to a whole week extend,
Like STEELE *(when unassisted by a friend):*
But thou shalt live a year in spite of fate;
And where's your Author boasts a longer date? GAY.

THERE is a laudable curiosity which generally prevails among those who feel interested in what they read, to know something of the history and habits of life of the author; and prudent men are still more anxious to know the character and qnalifications of the person who offers himself as a Companion: that my readers may be enabled to decide on the propriety of admitting me as one of their associates, I shall, by way of introduction to my intended essays, give a short history of my past life; which they will find sufficiently varied to afford at least an opportunity to acquire that knowledge and experience which would best qualify me for the character I have assumed.

I am a native of Pennsylvania; my grand-father, Ephraim Easy, was one of the society of Friends, he possessed a valuable farm within a few miles of Philadelphia, on which he resided; having a numerous family, my father, Thomas Easy, who was his second son, was early placed in the counting-house of his maternal uncle, a respectable merchant in Philadelphia. Being of a lively disposition and a favourite of his uncle, who had no children of his own, he was indulged in many gaieties of dress and amusements not very consistent with the plainness and strict morality generally practised by Quakers; his associates were of the most fashionable youths in the city, and often led him into irregularities, which indeed were winked at by his uncle, as they were more than balanced by his gentle and obliging manners, his attention to business, and thirst after useful knowledge, in the attainment of which the greater part of his leisure time was employed.—At the age of twenty he became attached to Maria Benham, the daughter of an English gentleman, second son of a baronet of considerable fortune, who in consequence of having offended his family by his marriage, had been obliged to engage in business as a merchant for the support of his family; and in hopes of bettering his situation had emigrated with his family, consisting of his wife, a son and daughter, to Philadelphia; they had letters from several correspondents of my father's uncle which recommended them so warmly to his particular care, that he invited them to reside in his own house; where Mr. Benham was seized with a severe illness, of which he died a few weeks after his arrival; having on his death-bed in the most earnest and affecting manner recommended his wife and children to the protection of my father and his uncle. "I leave them," said he, "strangers, in a strange land, with no friends but you and their God; be kind to them, protect them, and that God will assist and bless you." The solemn assurances of my father and his uncle that they would to the utmost of their power comply with his request, greatly relieved the agonized mind of Mr. Benham, and assisted in procuring him that calm composure with which he submitted to the fate of mortals.

The task of consoling the afflicted is a grateful one to all benevolent minds; with additional motives to influence my father's exertions, he very cordially joined his uncle in endeavouring to restore tranquility to the sad hearts of Benham's distressed family; and as their endeavors were constant and sincere, they were at last successful. My father for some time forbore to speak on the subject nearest his heart; he knew there was a time for grief, nor could he violate the sacred season of affliction: but the delicate attention which he paid to every circumstance that could alleviate their sorrows, the respectful assiduity with which he anticipated their wishes, and the affectionate manner in which he exerted himself, when a good understanding told him it was proper to administer consolation, more endeared him to Maria, than had he posseessed the eloquence of Cicero. In short their hearts knew each other, and when a proper time arrived, there required no long courtship; his uncle

took him into co-partnership, and they were married. If I cannot boast of ancestors whose illustrious names adorn the page of history, and dignify the poet's theme; yet I reflect with a pride in which not every one can participate, that I am the offspring of an union of honest hearts, who loved each other with ardent, pure, and disinterested affection. I was born in the month of May, in the year seventeen hundred and sixty-three, and in compliment to my mother's brother who stood sponsor for me, was named Edward. He was of a very quiet and sedentary disposition, and acted as clerk to my father: as soon as I was able to talk I became his chief favorite; having much leisure he undertook to teach me to read and write, joined with me in my little infantine amusements, and by his kind attention so much attached me to him, that I preferred his company to all other society; and as I thought him the best of men I endeavored to become like him in manners and gentleness of disposition.

When I was about ten years old, he received a letter from England informing him of the death of his aunt and couzin and that his uncle was then lying very ill, and anxiously wished him to return to England; the prospect of succeeding to a splendid fortune induced him to prepare immediately for his departure, and he prevailed on my parents to consent that I should accompany him and remain under his care until I should complete my education.

We arrived in England about a week after the death of the old baronet, and my uncle was immediately put in possession of the title and estate.—His aversion to the bustle and parade of high life induced him to fix his residence at the family mansion which was at a distance from London, where tutors were provided to attend to my education at home; at the age of seventeen I was entered at the university of Cambridge where I had continued three years, when the general peace which took place in eighty-three gave my uncle an opportunity which he had long wished, of sending me to visit some parts of the continent of Europe, a tour that he would not consent I should make during the continuance of the war.

The liberal allowance for expenses which his kindness afforded, would have been sufficient to enable me to travel in the magnificent stile of a young nobleman, with tutor and equipage; but as I had read with delight the description of those places thro' which I intended to pass, and was well acquainted with the history of the memorable events which had taken place in each of them; I was desirous of viewing uninterrupted and unnoticed those scenes which had been often the themes of my favorite authors: I set out therefore accompanied by a single servant, passed over to France, and instead of wasting weeks and months in the voluptuous circles of Paris, I travelled leisurely, through the different provinces, not merely visiting the great cities and post towns, but traversing in every direction that beautiful and fertile country, among a people of the most lively disposition, who received me with the generous openness of an old acquaintance, and took pleasure in giving me what information they possessed on every subject to which my enquiries were directed.

The observations which I made on the places through which I passed, and the manners of the people, to which my uncle requested me particularly to direct my attention, were regularly communicated to him by letter; these letters since his death have come to my possession, and will hereafter be used in illustrating the subjects of some of my essays: my intention at present is to give only a general outline of my travels—From France I proceeded to Italy where I visited with enthusiastic reverence those places immortalized in history and poetry; while viewing these and retracing in memory the hardy deeds of valor performed in and near them in past ages, I have often contrasted in imagination, those veteran heroes inured to fatigue and fearless of danger who raised to such a pitch of glory the Roman name, with the present effeminate race of musicians, who now act their frivolous part on that theatre, where almost every object reminds us that it was the ancient seat of universal empire.

While I remained at Naples I was surprized by a letter from my uncle informing me of his marriage, assuring me at the same time that it had caused no alteration in his affection for me, and requesting that I would continue my travels, and gratify him by my correspondence with which he expressed himself to be much pleased; this letter was accompanied by a remmittance and was delivered to me by Mr. Fenton, a young English gentleman who had also a letter of introduction from my uncle: as the son of one of his particular friends, I of course received him cordially and found him to be an interesting and agreeable companion. We continued to travel together for several months through different parts of Italy until the beginning of winter, when we proceeded to Rome, where we intended to stay until the next spring.—It was here my uncle had forwarded to me a long letter of my father's, the first he had received from him for many years; this letter gave a short account of the material events that had occurred in his family for the last ten years, and explained very satisfactorily the cause of his long silence: his uncle had died shortly after the commencement of the revolutionary war and had bequeathed

to him the greater part of his property. As my father's marriage had necessarily excluded him from the society of friends, and he could not again be admitted without professing a sorrow which he did not feel, being more inclined to accompany my mother to the church in the principles of which she was educated;—his religion offered no scruples to prevent his taking an active part in the war in defence of American liberty; in this cause he was indeed an enthusiast—His property was amply sufficient to secure his family against the probability of want, in case of any accident happening to him. Having procured a captain's commission in the beginning of the year seventy-six, and his activity being soon noticed by general Washington, for whom he felt a respect approaching to adoration, he was advanced before the end of the following year to the rank of colonel. The incidents of his military career are of a very interesting nature, snd may be occasionally introduced in some future papers.—Fenton and myself were now about sailing for England when a letter from my uncle, informed me of the birth of his son, and that my safe return was all that he wished to complete his happiness. Congenial spirits will always cleave to each other when they meet, but when they meet far from home, when their object is the same, their age and education similar, and they traverse together over ground, almost every inch of which is celebrated in the classick page, and in reading which their bosoms have glowed with admiration; when in mutual esteem and unsuspecting frankness, every notice of the mind and every feeling of the soul is interchanged without reserve; then it is that the noblest, most honorable and lasting friendships are formed; and such was the friendship with which I was honored by Fenton. When we arrived at the house of his father in London, I found my uncle had come there to meet me, he received me with the fond affection of a parent, and I felt as much delight in meeting him as if he had been really so—I was introduced to Sir Thomas Fenton his wife and danghter: Sir Thomas Fenton possessed a considerable estate near my uncle's, and was a member of parliament. In the country and in the circle of his acquaintances he was social and agreeable, but at the same time proud and ambitious; his wife was a woman of most amiable character, much attached to the pleasures of domestic life and averse to mixing in the follies of the fashionable world: I shall not now attempt to describe either the person or character of Louisa Fenton; the first short hour that I passed in her company she appeared all that I had ever conceived was lovely and estimable in woman, and each succeeding interview increased my first prepossession. After a short stay in London, which with all its gaiety and splendor, appeared dull and uninteresting I gladly went with my uncle to his estate; the idea of Louisa never forsook my imagination, I felt an anxiety I had never before experienced, was pensive, silent, and abstracted.

"Why does the youth delight to rove
"Through the dark mazes of the grove?
"Why in the throng where all are gay,
"His wand'ring eye with meaning fraught
"Silent he sits in secret thought?
"Silent he sits, for far away
"His passion'd soul delights to stray;
"Recluse he roves, and seeks to shun
"All human kind, because he *loves* but one."

My uncle's endeavors to amuse and enliven me, had no effect until we received information that Sir Thomas Fenton and his family had arrived at his seat, and my uncle proposed to visit them, to this I consented with alacrity, we were received with great cordiality by all the family, my wonted spirits were soon restored, and my uncle soon suspected the true cause of my former melancholy—Two months, two happy months of uninterrupted intercourse with my beloved Louisa gave me an opportunity of ascertaining that my passion was returned; when a trifling but fatal incident caused our mutual attachment to be suspected by her father, and the ingenuous Louisa on being questioned by him did not attempt to conceal it.—The ambitious Baronet who was looking out to match his daughter in the highest rank of life, was highly offended at the discovery; he peremtorily told me that I must relinquish my suit; and requested that I would discontinue my visits. The affliction which this proud dismissal occasioned, made it impossible fo me to conceal it from my uncle; he felt sincerely for my distress, but as he knew of no method of entirely removing it, he advised me to visit my native land, as a change of scene might tend to divert my grief: this not only prudence dictated but duty demanded, as my mother was in a declining state of health. I was anxious to see my Louisa once more before my departure, but as that was impossible, I wrote to her a solemn assurance, that whatever might be her fate, I would never love any other woman.

My dear and excellent parent did not long survive after my arrival in Philadelphia; and my father's grief for her loss was excessive. As every object round their usual residence tended strongly to remind him of his loss, he resolved to try the effect of travelling to divert his melancholy, and at the same time to give me an opportunity of viewing attentively every part of my own country.

I had already seen most of the European states, and had

viewed the various scenes through which I past, and the different kinds of people with no inattentive eye: and tho' I acknowledged their superiority in agriculture, in manufactures, in arts, in literature, in refinement and in grandeur; yet as my heart was not rendered callous by false philosophy, the genuine feelings of nature reigned uncontrouled and unadulterated in my bosom, and the land that gave me birth was the land of my affection. Beside these feelings which are purely natural, and which no one can lose without degradation, I had stronger bonds of attachment. When in the course of our travels my father pointed out the various spots, and described the actions in which he had fought, my spirit swelled with proud exultation; I regretted that I had not come into the world twenty years sooner, and vowed sole allegiance to that country whose soil had been moistened with blood from the source which gave me being. Our travels were performed leisurely through every part of the United States; my father as well as myself was so much amused and interested, that we continued this itinerant plan of life until the fall of the year seventeen hundred and ninety, when we returned to Philadelphia after having visited almost every city and town of any note in the U. States, and passed many pleasant days in company with those veteran chiefs who had been my father's companions during the war, for by each of these we were received with the greatest kindness and hospitality.—Early in ninety-two I received information of the death of Sir Thomas Fenton, and departed immediately for England. My loved Louisa still remained faithful, but her constant refusal to marry agreeably to her father's wishes had so exasperated him that he had not made any provision for her in his will, and a small legacy left her by a maiden aunt constituted the whole of her fortune—this circumstance made no alteration in my affection; I loved her for herself, and only waited until the usual time of mourning had elapsed, to claim her as my own, when an afflicting incident caused a new delay in the celebration of our nuptials: this was the sudden death of my uncle, the best of men, and who had been to me the kindest friend and fond as a parent. It appeared on examination that he had not made a will, and I soon found from his widow that my residence there was rather permitted than wished. I had now no inducement to remain in England, and soon after our marriage my Louisa consented to accompany me to America. On our arrival there I was alarmed by the accounts daily received of the great mortality in Philadelphia, caused by the yellow fever, which was then desolating that city. I wrote immediately to my father, and received an answer from my sister, confirming all I dreaded to hear; my father had been one of the many victims to that dreadful disease; he caught the fever by attending on her—she recovered, and he is gone to receive the reward of a well spent life, where sin, and pain, and sorrow, are no more. My income was now more than equal to the moderate wishes of Louisa and myself; but we took no pleasure in exhibiting the glittering appendages of life; we felt, and knew that we were happy, and needed not those gaudy substitutes with which the weary votaries of pleasure endeavour to impose upon themselves and others. For four years I enjoyed felicity as perfect and as great as ever was fabled in romance, or the glowing pencil of poetical fancy ever painted.

But those days are past—the sun of my life has set for ever—the delight of my eyes, and the joy of my heart, rests in the silent tomb. The lenient hand of time has dried up the tears of unavailing sorrow, and Louisa still lives in the person of a lovely daughter, whose birth cost the life of her mother. To rear this tender shoot, is the sole object of my hope and solicitude.

> "To pour the fresh instruction on the mind,
> "To breath the enlivening spirit, and to fix
> "The gen'rous purpose in the glowing breast,"

is the delightful task divided between my maiden sister and myself; and this, with moderate exercise and moderate study, the social intercourse of a few chosen friends, and the amusement I find in putting my thoughts and opinions on paper, makes the residue of life glide away in tranquility and ease.

Having drawn out the history of myself and family to a greater length than I intended, it is time to give my readers a portion of that rest which I enjoy, and which he that has rambled as much as myself will be desirous to prolong. My curiosity has been satisfied, novelty has lost her most alluring charms, and it might by some be thought excusable if I felt the tedium vitæ, and repined at the small portion of bliss that was allotted me; but I have ever had a contemptible opinion of that mortal, who, possessed of rational faculties, suffers his mind to rust in idleness and his temper to sour with discontent, when Providence has put so many resources within his reach: and pride would never suffer me to place unnecessary dependence on the ability or inclination of others to restore me to that tranquility, which with the assistance of heaven I could acquire myself. I shall now indulge in my easy chair, claim the priviledges of a traveller, and anticipate some portion of that garrulity which is allowed to men more advanced in years. Whether I shall be able to amuse others, is yet to be tried—but he that can support and enjoy a solitary hour him-

self, is not unprovided with materials. Having seen so much of mankind, so many different modifications of human life, and such variety of manners and customs, I may reasonably hope that some will esteem me as an *intelligent Companion*.

Since I have ceased to travel, my life has been sedentary and my bodily habits rather indolent; I love to keep my seat, cross my legs, and have my talk out. I can laugh at a merry story, and now and then tell one in my turn; I can enjoy a little inoffensive raillery as much when I am myself the subject of it as when others are; and when the cheerful glass goes round, I am not only *Easy*, but have sometimes been called a *pleasant Companion*.

But as I believe there may be conversation without scandal—a free exercise of opinion without an insolent disregard for the sentiments and feelings of others—that there may be gallantry and a polite attention to the Fair, without insulting their understandings with gross flattery, without indulging every idle caprice, and without stooping to mean artifices of insinuation to gain affections only to trifle with or betray—that there may be wit without obscenity, and spirit without swearing, or blaspheming what the best men hold to be sacred—that a man may find diversion without going to the gaming-table, and acquire knowledge of the world without an intimate acquaintance with the frail inhabitants of brothels:—As I wish to retain these and a few other antiquated notions, it will be no great disappointment if the Bucks and the Bloods refuse to acknowledge me as a *jolly Companion*.

By those who are immersed in business, whose souls are exclusively devoted to the pursuit of riches, who suffer no ideas to intrude upon their speculations, or to disturb their calculations on exchange, insurance and bank stock, I never expect to be regarded as an *interesting Companion*.

To the pert and flippant Gad-a-bouts, whose chief employment is to parade the streets, to tumble over the goods of the too patient store-keeper, and to make themselves cheap in the eyes of every idle gazer; or to the vacant, smirking Beau who dangles after them, I shall be but a dull Companion.

From those who rank high in literary honours, whose lives are devoted to severe and serious studies, who have made

Captive Science yield her last retreat,

I should be glad to learn; they would find me docile and attentive, happy to be thought worthy of their notice, and proud to be occasionally admitted as a humble Companion.

To every class of society I would wish to render myself acceptable, while it can be done on the *easy* terms of plainly and candidly unfolding my sentiments and communicating the result of my observations, without flattering folly, or fearing to reprehend vice.—But should the attempt to please be unsuccessful, I can, at a proper time, withdraw from the publick attention, and save myself from the epithet of a *tiresome* Companion.

SELECTED POETRY.

The idea of the following tale is derived from a relation, which the writer met with in a miccellaneous volume entitled THE GLEANER. *The relation itself is professed to have been extracted from a work called,* Jackson's State of the Defunct. P. 97.

"*An acquaintance of mine, an Oxford scholar, hath to my certain knowledge and belief, cured many disorders, and laid the ghosts of many disturbed people, when no other person could do them. In a village where I lived, I do know that there was a great house, a mansion-house, haunted by a spirit that turned itself into a thousand shapes and forms, but generally came in the figure of a boiled scrag of mutton, and had baffled and defied the learned men of both Universities; but this being told to my friend, who was a descendant and relation of the learned Friar Bacon, he undertook to lay it, and that even without his books; and it was done in this manner: he ordered some water to be put into a clean skillet, that was new, and had never been on the fire. When the water boiled, he himself pulled off his hat and shoes, and then took seven turnips, which he had pared with a small penknife that had been rubbed and whetted on a loadstone, and put them into the water. When they were boiled, he ordered some butter to be melted in a new glazed earthen pipkin, and then mashed the turnips in it. Just as this was finished, I myself saw the ghost in the form of a Boiled Scrag of Mutton, peep in at the window, which I gave him notice of and he stuck his fork into him, and soused both him and the turnips into a pewter dish, and eat both up. And the house was ever after quiet and still. Now this I should not have believed, or thought true, but I stood by, and saw the whole ceremony performed!!!*"

THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOLAR;

OR, THE GHOST OF A SCRAG OF MUTTON.

IN the days that are past, by the banks of a stream
Whose waters but softly were flowing,
With ivy o'ergrown, an old mansion-house stood,
That was built on the skirts of a chilling damp wood,
Where the yew-tree and cypress were growing.

The villagers shook as they pass'd by the doors,
When they rested at eve from their labours;
And the traveller many a furlong went round,
If his ears once admitted the terrific sound
Of the tale that was told by the neighbours.

They said, that the house on the skirts of the wood
By a saucer-eye'd GHOST was infested,
Which fill'd ev'ry heart with confusion and fright,
By assuming strange shapes in the dead of the night,
Shapes monstrous, and foul and detested.

And *truly* they said—and the Master well knew
That the Ghost was the greatest of evils;
For no sooner the bell of the mansion toll'd one,
Than the frolicksome imp in a fury began
To caper like ten thousand devils.

He appear'd in all forms the most strange and uncouth—
  Sure never was gobling so daring!
He utter'd loud shrieks and most horrible cries,
Curs'd his body and bones, and his *sweet little eyes*,
  Till his impudence grew beyond bearing.

Just at this nick o'time, as the Master's sad heart
  With anguish and sorrow was swelling,
He heard that a Scholar, with science replete,
Full of mystical lore as an *egg* is with meat,
  Had taken at CAMBRIDGE a dwelling.

The Scholar was vers'd in all magical arts,
  Most famous was he throughout College:
To the Red Sea full many an unquiet ghost,
To repose with King Pharoah and his mighty host,
  He had sent, through his powerful knowledge.

To this Scholar so learned, the Master he went,
  And, as lowly he bent with submission,
Told the freaks of the Ghost, and the horrible frights,
That prevented his household from resting o'nights,
  And offer'd his humble petition:

"That he, the said Scholar, in wisdom so *wise*,
  Would the mischievous fiend lay in fetters;
And send him, in torments forever to dwell,
To the nethermost pit of the nethermost hell,
  For destroying the sleep of his betters."

The Scholar so vers'd in all mystical lore,
  Told the Master his pray'r should be granted;—
Then order'd his horse to be saddled with speed,
And perch'd on the back of the cream-colour'd steed,
  Trotted off to the house that was haunted.

He enter'd the doors at the fall o'the night—
  The trees of the forrest 'gan shiver;
The hoarse raven croak'd, and blue burnt the light,
The owl loudly shriek'd, and, pale with affright,
  The servants like aspins did quiver.

"Bring some turnips and milk!" the Scholar he cry'd,
  In a voice like the echoing thunder:—
They brought him some turnips, and suet beside,
Some milk and a spoon, and his motions they ey'd,
  Quite lost in conjecture and wonder.

He took up the turnips and peel'd off the skin,
  Put them into a pot that was boiling;
Spread a table and cloth, and made ready to sup,
Then call'd for a fork, and the turnips fish'd up,
  In a hurry, for they were a-spoiling.

He mash'd up the turnips with butter and milk;—
  The hail at the casement 'gan clatter;
Yet the Scholar ne'er heeded the tempest without,
But, raising his eyes, and turning about,
  Ask'd the maid for a small wooden platter.

He mash'd up the turnips with butter and milk,—
  The storm came on thicker and faster:
The lightnings blue flash'd, and with terrific din
The wind at each crevice and cranny came in,
  Tearing up by the roots lath and plaster.

He mash'd up the turnips with butter and milk—
  The mess would have ravish'd a glutton;
When, lo! his sharp bones hardly cover'd with skin,
The Ghost, from a nook o'er the window peep'd in,
  In the form of a BOIL'D SCRAG OF MUTTON.

"Ho! ho!" said the Ghost, "what art doing below?"
  The Scolar look'd up in a twinkling—
"The times are too bad to afford any meat,
So, to render my turnips more pleasant to eat,
  A few grains of pepper I'm sprinkling."

Then he caught up a fork and the Mutton he seiz'd,
  And sous'd it at once in the platter;
Threw o'er it some salt, and a spoonfull of fat,
And before the poor Ghost could tell what he was at,
He was gone!—like a mouse down the throat of a cat,
  And this is the whole of the matter.

TO CONTENTMENT.

O'er the wild heath, at early dawn,
  I trace thy footsteps gentle pow'r!
At noon, retiring from the lawn,
  I seek thee in the shadowy bow'r.

When chilling blasts and nightly dews
  Warn me to quit the drooping grove,
I woo thee to inspire my Muse,
  Or bless the hours of social love.

And, while our offspring, void of guile,
  Around in sportive frolicks join,
I watch the fond maternal smile
  Of *her* whose every joy is mine.

Ah! sweet Contentment! heaveniy maid,
  Wilt thou not hear thy vot'ry's prayer?
Nor the gay sports, nor silent shade,
  Nor soft domestic pleasures share?

Vain were the hope: true Love disdains
  The joys that reach itself alone:
It saddens at another's pains,
  It glows with raptures not its own.

As the pale orb of Cynthia throws,
  It's borrow'd lustre o'er the night,
My soul no native transport knows,
  It shines but with reflected light.

Come, then, dear goddess! fix thy reign
  In my lov'd Celia's gentle breast;
Chase anxious care, quell murm'ring pain,
  And, blessing her, preserve me blest.

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